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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *October* the 24th, 1754.

——*Medio tutiſſimus ibis.* OVID.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

THE golden mean, or middle track of life, has always been eſteemed the beſt, becauſe it is the happieſt: and I believe, upon enquiry, it will be found to be the happieſt, becauſe the people ſo ſituated are the wiſeſt part of mankind; and being the wiſeſt, are beſt able to ſubdue thoſe turbulent paſſions which are the greateſt enemies to happineſs.

BUT

But has not a man of the firſt rank and fortune a greater opportunity, in proportion to that fortune, to acquire knowledge, than a man in middling circumſtances? Moſt certainly he has; and I make no doubt but that perſons of the firſt quality would be perſons of the firſt underſtanding, if it was not for one very material obſtacle, I mean FASHION. There are no two characters ſo entirely incompatible as a man of ſenſe and a man of faſhion. A man of faſhion muſt devote his whole time to the faſhionable pleaſures: among the firſt of theſe may be reckoned gaming, in the purſuit of which we cannot allow him leſs than a third part of the twenty four hours; and the other ſixteen (allowing for a little ſleep) are to be ſpent in amuſements perhaps leſs vicious, but not more profitable.

I would not here be underſtood to mean, that every man of quality is a man of faſhion; on the contrary, I know of ſeveral whoſe titles ſerve to make their merits more conſpicuous; but I cannot help obſerving that the noble lord who holds the firſt place amongſt the men of wit and genius, has not been known to alter the cock of his little hat for above theſe twenty years.

If we conſider the loweſt claſs of life but for a moment, we ſhall not be at a loſs to account for their ignorance. They have little more time from their labour than what is neceſſary for refreſhment. They work to ſupply their own neceſſities, and the luxuries of the great. Let us examine now how far theſe two extremes of life reſemble each other in their recreations and diverſions. John Slaughter, the butcher, trots his gooſe-rumped mare twelve miles within the hour for twenty guineas. My lord rides his own horſe a match for five hundred. Two bricklayer's labourers play at

all-fours

all-fours in an alehouſe on a Saturday night for their week's wages. His grace and count Baſſet are doing the ſame thing at WHITE's for all they are worth in the world. My lord, having been unfortunate in an amour, ſends to the doctor at Whitehall. Tom Errand, in the ſame dilemma, runs away to the licentiate upon Ludgate-hill. In their taſte too they are the ſame. It is common in our theatres for the plaudit to come at one and the ſame time from the boxes and the upper gallery. In their plurality of wives and miſtreſſes, in their non-obſervance of religious ceremonies, and in many other particulars, which I ſhall forbear to mention, they ſeem entirely to agree.

FOR my own part, I imbibed early the love of mediocrity; and I find it growing upon me, as I encreaſe in years: inſomuch that my diſcourſe, let the ſubject be what it will, is generally tinctured with it. Nay, I am even afraid, Mr. Fitz-Adam, when I tell you ſome little anecdotes of my life, that you will accuſe me of running into the EXTREME, by adhering too cloſely and circumſtantially to the MEDIUM. For example. I gave more for my chambers than I need to have done, becauſe I would have them in the Middle Temple, a ſituation very agreeable to me, as lying in the midway between the city and the court. I have never thought myſelf ſo happy at the playhouſe, ſince Burton's box was taken down, though I always ſit in the center of the middle gallery. And to tell you the truth, I have often wiſhed myſelf ſhorter, becauſe I am ſomewhat above the middle ſtature.

THIS particular way of thinking very frequently ſubjects me to little rudeneſſes and affronts. It was but t'other night that a young gentleman of our inn, who

aſpires

aſpires at being lord chancellor, wiſhed me in the middle of a horſe-pond, for dwelling, perhaps, a little too long on the happineſs of a middle ſtate; and it is no new thing to me at Nando's, to overhear the ſmarts, at my entrance into that coffee-houſe, crying out, "here comes "old MEDIUM".

THESE, Mr. Fitz-Adam, are diſagreeable things; but then I have the ſelf-ſatisfaction of knowing that I am in the right. But I treſpaſs on your patience, and beſides, have made my letter longer than I intended: I ſhall therefore conclude abruptly with that excellent wiſh of Agur's "Give me neither poverty nor riches."

I am, *&c.*

BY way of ſupplement to the above, and to illuſtrate by example the abſurdity of running into extremes, I ſhall preſent my readers with another letter, which I received ſome time ago from a female correſpondent.

Mr. FITZ-ADAM,

I AM an humble couſin to two ſiſters, who though they are good-humoured, good ſort of people, and (all things conſidered) behave to me tolerably well, yet their manners and diſpoſitions are ſo extremely oppoſite, that the taſk of pleaſing them is rendered very difficult and troubleſome. The eldeſt of my couſins is a very jolly free-hearted girl, and ſo great an enemy to all kinds of form, that you ſeldom ſee her with ſo much as a pin in her gown; while the youngeſt, who thinks in her heart that her ſiſter is no better than a SLATTERN, runs into the contrary extreme, and is in every thing ſhe does,

does, an abſolute FIDFAD. She takes up almoſt as much time to put on a gown, as her ſiſter does to dirt one. The eldeſt is too thoughtleſs to remember what ſhe is to do, and the youngeſt is ſo tedious in doing it, that the time is always elapſed in which it was neceſſary for it to be done. If you lend any thing to the eldeſt, you are ſure to have it loſt; or if you would borrow any thing of the youngeſt, it is odds but ſhe refuſes it, from an opinion that you will be leſs careful of it than herſelf. Whatever work is done by one ſiſter, is too ſlight to hang together for an hour's wear; and whatever is undertaken by the other, is generally too nice and curious to be finiſhed.

As they are conſtantly bed-fellows, the firſt ſleep of the eldeſt is ſure to be broke by the youngeſt, whoſe uſual time of undreſſing and folding up her clothes, is at leaſt an hour and a half, allowing for a third part of that time for hindrances, occaſioned by her elder ſiſter's things, which lie ſcattered everywhere in her way.

IF they had lovers, Mr. Fitz-Adam, I know exactly how it would be: the eldeſt would loſe her's by ſaying YES too ſoon, and the youngeſt by ſaying NO too often. If they were wives, the one would be too haſty to do any thing right, and the other too tedious to do any thing pleaſing: or were they mothers, the daughters of the eldeſt would be playing at taw with the boys, and the ſons of the youngeſt dreſſing dolls with the miſſes.

I WISH, Mr. Fitz-Adam, that you would be ſo kind to theſe couſins of mine as to favour them with your advice. I have told you already that they are

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